
Secretariat memorandum

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Agenda item 11

LTW592

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Proposed closure of London Overground ticket offices – public consultation

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To advise members about the recent public consultation on the proposed closure of 51 ticket offices operated by Arriva Rail London (ARL) trading as London Overground, under Schedule 17 clause 6-18 of the Ticketing and Settlement Agreement (TSA). Members should note that this is an interim report. A further report will be produced following analysis of all responses.

2 Background

- 2.1 On the 20th September 2018, ARL wrote to London TravelWatch to commence a formal closure process for 51 of their station ticket offices. Their submission is appended to this report in Appendix A.
- 2.2 London TravelWatch has conducted a public consultation in accordance with the statutory process for this change. This ran from Thursday 20th September 2018 to Friday 12th October 2018.
- 2.3 We visited several of the affected stations and confirmed the proposal was well publicised, with posters in appropriate locations at all the stations.
- 2.4 During this period 3,400 responses were received through our online questionnaire, 959 emails were received at our consultations email address, 2,063 postcard responses and 31 written submissions were received. We received petitions from community groups and a trade union and submissions from a trade union, MPs, London Assembly Members, Local Authorities, councillors, rail user groups and a business. The responses to the 'Which station?' question, and the demographic questions from the online survey are reported in Appendix B.
- 2.5 The volume of comments received has been considerable and it has not been possible to complete a detailed analysis of these in the short period between the closure of the consultation and the production of this report.
- 2.6 Of the 51 stations involved with this submission, two stations (Stamford Hill and Theobalds Grove) do not have a functioning ticket office at present due to long term structural damage to the building that housed these. However, the data

used for these stations is of an equivalent earlier period when the ticket offices were open and available.

- 2.7 With the exception of five stations (Bush Hill Park, Carpenders Park, Homerton, Honor Oak Park and Shepherds Bush) all stations have a recorded average of fewer than three transactions per fifteen minute period throughout their operational day. These stations have seven periods of more than three transactions per fifteen minute period, all with less than 4, but more than 3 transactions.
- 2.8 All the stations have at least one period of fifteen minutes where the average number of transactions per fifteen minute period was less than one. This means that on many days the number of transactions during this period will have been zero.

3 Stakeholder views

- 3.1 These will be reported to members when they have been fully analysed.

4 London TravelWatch policy

- 4.1 London TravelWatch has an established policy for considering applications of this type. This involves:
- analysing the use made of a ticket office;
 - the availability of tickets from alternative sources such as ticket vending machines or the use of smartcards or contactless bank cards;
 - the impact of the change on the availability of information;
 - visible staff members at the station.
- 4.2 London TravelWatch has generally taken the view that where there are fewer than three transactions per fifteen minute period on average, then it would not object to the change in principle.
- 4.3 London TravelWatch has objected to applications (from other rail operators), where the numbers of transactions have exceeded the three per fifteen minute period average. The decision on whether or not this should be approved in full or part has then been made by the Secretary of State for Transport. In general the Secretary of State has determined that where the numbers of transactions has been on average fewer than three per fifteen minute period or only marginally above for one period of fifteen minutes that the closure should be allowed to proceed.
- 4.4 All of the stations included in this proposal from ARL meet the Secretary of State's criteria for allowing a closure to proceed, and would also meet London TravelWatch's criteria for not objecting in principle to the change. However, the purpose of consulting with passengers is to ascertain their views and any other factors that should be taken into account before a decision is made.
- 4.5 As noted above, the volume of correspondence received is significant in scale and therefore a full analysis has not been possible in the timescales for this meeting. Officers have therefore requested an extension of the formal

consultation process from ARL and the DfT to enable London TravelWatch to fully understand the issues raised by passengers.

5 Mitigation measures

- 5.1 ARL and TfL have invested significantly in recent years in new ticket vending machines at all of the stations subject to this proposal. Most of the tickets that are currently sold through the ticket office are now available on these machines. There are some exceptions, and the submission also highlights some stations where reliability is an issue, but generally the proposition is that the same tickets will be available at the ticket vending machine.
- 5.2 Most other ticketing functions that are performed at a ticket office will either remain available on ticket vending machines (in some cases through the use of staff functions) or will be available by other means, or where a better value option exists for a passenger using another means e.g. odd period season tickets, a better value solution would be to advise the purchase of a monthly or annual season ticket and then use Oyster / Contactless Pay As You Go for the remaining period required, with daily, weekly and monthly capping applied.
- 5.3 ARL and TfL have confirmed their commitment to staffing of all the stations from first to last train, and making these staff available and visible to provide assistance, information and to help people using ticket vending machines. The model of staffing would be the same as existing arrangements at 15 other London Overground stations (All stations between Upper Holloway and Woodgrange Park, Wandsworth Road, Clapham High Street, Emerson Park, Bethnal Green, Cambridge Heath, London Fields and Seven Sisters).

6 London TravelWatch priority

- 6.1 London TravelWatch has a statutory obligation to consider applications for changes to ticket office hours under schedule 17 of the Ticketing and Settlement Agreement. Matters in this report therefore meet London TravelWatch's prioritisation criteria.

7 Equalities and inclusion implications

- 7.1 There are a number of equalities and inclusion implications arising from this report, relating to access to tickets and also how passengers will be required to access services such as Passenger Assist. The online questionnaire included a specific question around disability and this was answered by 278 (9.7%) respondents. Compared to the total number of responses, this was a significant proportion.

8 Legal powers

- 8.1 Section 248 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 places upon London TravelWatch (as the London Transport Users Committee) a duty to consider - and where it appears to the Committee to be desirable, to make recommendations with respect to - any matter affecting the functions of the

Greater London Authority or Transport for London which relate to transport (other than of freight). Section 252A of the same Act (as amended by Schedule 6 of the Railways Act 2005) places a similar duty upon the Committee to keep under review matters affecting the interests of the public in relation to railway passenger and station services provided wholly or partly within the London railway area, and to make representations about them to such persons as it thinks appropriate.

9 Financial implications

9.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report for London TravelWatch.

10 Recommendation

10.1 Members are recommended to note the report.

10.2 Members are recommended to defer a decision on this item until further analysis of the questionnaire and other correspondence used in the consultation has been completed.

10.3 Members should agree how the final decision should be considered.

Appendices

A - Arriva London's submission

B – Station and demographic responses from the online survey